

grant applications or the relevance of those applications to one or more of the research purposes contained in § 3411.15 of this part.

(l) *Research* means any systematic study directed toward new or fuller knowledge and understanding of the subject studied.

(1) *Fundamental research*, as referred to annually in the program solicitation, means research that tests scientific hypotheses and provides basic knowledge which allows advances in applied research and from which major conceptual breakthroughs are expected to occur.

(2) *Mission-linked research*, as referred to annually in the program solicitation, means research on specifically identified agricultural problems which, through a continuum of efforts, provides information and technology that may be transferred to users and may relate to a product, practice, or process.

(3) *Multidisciplinary research*, as referred to annually in the program solicitation, means research in which investigators from two or more disciplines are collaborating closely. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.

(m) *Methodology* means the project approach to be followed and the resources needed to carry out the project.

(n) *Small and mid-sized institution* means an academic institution with a total enrollment of 15,000 or less. An institution in this instance is an organization that possesses a significant degree of academic and administrative autonomy, as specified in the annual program solicitation.

(o) *USDA-EPSCoR States (Experimental Program for Stimulating Competitive Research)* means States which have had a funding level from the USDA NRICGP no higher than the 38th percentile of all States, based on a three-year rolling average, and all United States territories and possessions. A list of eligible States is published annually in the program solicitation.

[56 FR 57952, Nov. 14, 1991. Redesignated and amended at 60 FR 63368, 63369, Dec. 8, 1995; 61 FR 45319, Aug. 29, 1996]

§ 3411.3 Eligibility requirements.

(a) Except where otherwise prohibited by law, State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, Federal agencies, private organizations or corporations, and individuals, shall be eligible to apply for and to receive a competitive grant award under this part, provided that the applicant qualifies as a responsible grantee under the criteria set forth in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) To qualify as responsible, an applicant must meet the following standards as they relate to a particular project:

(1) Adequate financial resources for performance, the necessary experience, organizational and technical qualifications, and facilities, or a firm commitment, arrangement, or ability to obtain some (including by proposed sub-agreements);

(2) Ability to comply with the proposed or required completion schedule for the project;

(3) Satisfactory record of integrity, judgment, and performance, including, in particular, any prior performance under grants and contracts from the Federal government;

(4) Adequate financial management system and audit procedures that provide efficient and effective accountability and control of all funds, property, and other assets; and

(5) Otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a grant under the applicable laws and regulations; eligibility for specific program areas or categories of competitive grants to improve research capabilities will be outlined in the program solicitation.

(c) Any applicant who is determined to be not responsible will be notified in writing of such finding and the basis therefor.

(d) *Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards*. In addition to paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section, the following eligibility requirements apply to Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards (Program reserves the right to specify funding limitations and administrative requirements each year in the program solicitation):

(1) *Postdoctoral Fellowships*. In accordance with Section 2(b)(3)(D) of the Act

of August 4, 1965, as amended, individuals who have recently received or will soon receive their doctoral degree may submit proposals for postdoctoral fellowships. The following eligibility requirements apply:

(i) The doctoral degree of the applicant must be received not earlier than January 1 of the fiscal year three years prior to the submission of the proposal and not later than June 15 of the fiscal year during which the proposal is submitted;

(ii) The individual must be a citizen of the United States; and

(iii) The proposal must contain:

(A) documentation that arrangements have been made with an established investigator to serve as mentor;

(B) documentation that arrangements have been made for the necessary facilities, space, and materials for conduct of the research; and

(C) documentation from the host institution's authorized organizational representative indicating that the host institution concurs with these arrangements.

(2) *New Investigator Awards.* Pursuant to Section 2(b)(3)(E) of the Act of August 4, 1965, as amended, investigators or co-investigators who are beginning their research careers, do not have an extensive research publication record, and have less than 5 years of post-graduate, career-track research experience may submit proposals as new investigators. Applicants may not have received competitively-awarded Federal research funds beyond the level of pre- or postdoctoral research awards.

(3) *Strengthening Awards.* Applicants that are eligible for any grant under this part may also be eligible for Equipment Grants, Research Career Enhancement Awards, Seed Grants, and Strengthening Standard Research Project Awards pursuant to Sections 2(b)(3) (D) and (F) of the Act of August 4, 1965, as amended, subject to the following limitations on such eligibility:

(i) *Equipment Grants.* The following organizations are ineligible to apply for Equipment grants:

(A) Institutions which are among the top 100 universities and colleges for receiving Federal funds for science and engineering research as specified in the annual program solicitation; or

(B) non-degree granting institutions.

(ii) *Research Career Enhancement Awards, Seed Grants, and Strengthening Standard Research Project Awards.* The following eligibility requirements apply to Research Career Enhancement Awards, Seed Grants, and Strengthening Standard Research Project Awards:

(A) No investigator listed on the Application For Funding (Form CSRS-661) may have received a USDA NRICGP competitive research grant within the last five years as evidenced by an investigator listing on a prior Form CSRS-661 (an investigator may have received a Seed Grant, Research Career Enhancement Award, Equipment Grant, or Postdoctoral Fellowship and still be eligible to receive a Strengthening Standard Research Project Award);

(B) All investigators listed on the Application For Funding (Form CSRS-661) must be from a small or mid-sized institution that is not among the top 100 universities and colleges for receiving Federal funds for science and engineering research as specified in the annual program solicitation or must be from an institution located in a USDA-EPSCoR state; and

(C) Every investigator listed on the Application For Funding (Form CSRS-661) must have an appointment at a degree granting institution.

[56 FR 57952, Nov. 14, 1991. Redesignated and amended at 60 FR 63368, 63369, Dec. 8, 1995]

§ 3411.4 How to apply for a grant.

(a) A program solicitation will be prepared and announced through publications such as the FEDERAL REGISTER, professional trade journals, agency or program handbooks, the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, or any other appropriate means, as early as practicable each fiscal year. It will contain information sufficient to enable all eligible applicants to prepare competitive grant proposals and will be as complete as possible with respect to:

(1) Descriptions of the specific research areas and the categories of competitive grants to improve research capabilities that the Department proposes to support during the fiscal year involved, including anticipated funds to be awarded;

(2) Eligibility requirements;